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chief of the Geraldine faction,\* and Walter de Burgo, Earl of Ulster, whose deadly wars, in the year 1264, wrought bloodshed and trouble throughout the realm of Ireland. The turbulent violence of the former party proceeded to such a height, that on the interposition of Richard de Repella, (called also Capella Rochel and des Roches), the chief justiciary, the Geraldines not only slighted his authority, but forcibly seized on his person, and placed him, with several others, (among whom was Richard de Burgo, son of Walter,) in confinement.

The very inadequate means possessed by the English sovereigns of quelling this spirit of discord, is sufficiently evident during the whole of the early period of Irish history, and more particularly during the reign of Henry the Third. By the appointment of Sir David Barry, in 1267, to the office of Justiciary, the violence of the Geraldines seems in some degree to have been controuled, and in a measure lessened; but the weakness of the king's representatives, in attempting to subdue the feuds of these turbulent barons, is clearly manifested by the rapid changes which took place during this period in the office of Justiciary, a fresh-successor being nominated nearly every twelve months. At length, either from the increasing ascendancy of the Geraldines, or what is more probable, from the policy of the English monarch, Maurice Fitzmaurice was constituted the royal deputy in 1272. He appears to have taken advantage of this mark of favour to revenge himself on the O'Brien's, his hereditary enemies; but being in his own turn betrayed by some of his followers, he was, in the succeeding year, A. D. 1273, taken prisoner, and obliged to give satisfaction for the deaths of his opponents. After a fresh series of similar contests, he died in the town of Ross, A. D. 1286; and the same year proved fatal to his son, Gerald Fitzmaurice, and his son-in-law, Thomas de Clare.

His adversary, Walter de Burgh, who married the daughter of Hugh de Lacy, and in her right inherited the earldom of Ulster, on her father's death, in 1264, was involved in the same scene of bloodshed; and on the cessation of the feud with the Geraldines, laid claim to the territories of Connaught, but being opposed by the O'Connors, and defeated in a conflict, he did not long survive, but after a week's illness, expired in his castle of Galiway, 26th of July, 1271, and was interred in the abbey of Althafil.

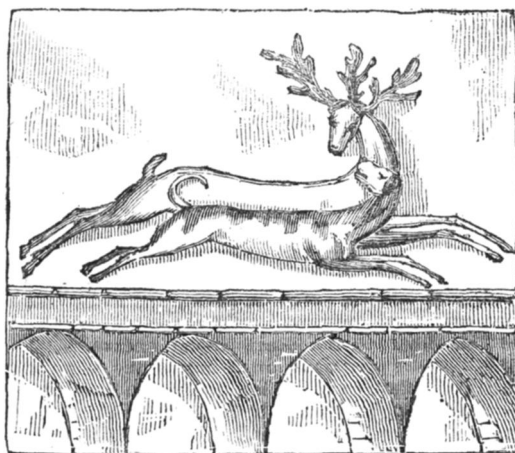
These historical data sufficiently confirm the account of the poet, in ascribing the erection of the walls of Ross to this troublesome period; and prove Camden to have been mistaken when he states that the walls were built by Isabel, daughter of Richard, Earl Strongbow.†

So little is known of the early history of New Ross, it is merely described by all topographers as having once been a place of great strength and extent, situated in a large ravine, formed by the junction of the rivers Barfow and Nore. Of its high walls and frowning towers and gates some remains continue until the present day. It was a place of considerable trade so early as the reign of Henry Fifth, and obtained charters from several of the English sovereigns, the earliest of which is supposed to be that of Henry the Fourth. Its port is so capacious that ships of nine hundred tons burden may come up to the quay; but the commerce of the town decreased, subsequently, to such a degree, that in 1776 we only find five or six brigs were to be seen in it. It has since rapidly improved, for upwards of thirty large ships, chiefly employed in emigration, belong to the merchants of the town. The port has also been lately opened, as previously it was in dependance to Waterford.

\* Sir James Ware calls him Earl of Desmond, and says he was drowned in 1263, while crossing from Ireland to Wales; but both these errors are corrected by Cox. The first Earl of Desmond was Maurice Fitzthomas, created by Edward the Third, August 27, 1329.

† Grose, in his Antiquities, Vol. 1, page 59, repeats an absurd variation of the same tradition, ascribing the inclosure of New Ross, with a wall, to Rose Macrue, sister of Strongbow, in the year 1310, who is said also to have built Hook Tower, in the same county, and to have been buried at Ross, in the church of St. Saviour's.

## THE ARMS OF THE TOWN OF ROSS.



Among the collection of the second Randle Holmes, for the city of Chester, (MS. Harleian, 2173, fol. 42,) is a copy of "a certyficat from the souveraine (mayor) of New Ross, alias Ross Ponte, in Ireland, to show how wee be free with them, and they with the city of Chester, of all customs," 29 Eliz. 1587, A. D. A seal was appended to the document, with the arms of Ross, being a greyhound pulling down a stag, and beneath, a bridge raised on several arches, from which bridge the appellation of Ross Pont was doubtless derived. Round the edge we read, "S. Office:....Superiour, Newe Rosse." In 1257 the Franciscans are said to have settled there; and a convent of St. Augustine's was founded in the reign of Edward the Third. Sir John Devereux subsequently erected the convent of St. Saviour on the site of the Franciscan monastery, and part of it is still appropriated to the use of a parish church. The more modern history of this place is chiefly remarkable for the defence made against the misguided peasantry on the 6th of June, 1798, by the garrison and inhabitants under the command of General Sir William Johnson, Bart.

The author of the poem commences in the following abrupt manner; "I have an inclination to write in romance, if it pleases you to hear me; for a story that is not listened to is of no more value than a berry. I pray you, therefore, to give attention, and you shall hear a fine adventure of a town in Ireland, the most beautiful of its size that I know in any country. Its inhabitants were alarmed by the feud existing between two barons, whose names you see here written, Sir Maurice and Sir Wauter. The name of this town I will now disclose to you—it is called Ros—it is the New Pont de Ross." He then proceeds to relate how the principal men of the town, together with the commonalty, assembled to take measures for their safety; and they resolved to surround the town with mortar and stone. They commenced, accordingly, on the feast of the Purification, (February 2, A. D. 1265,) and marked out the fosse or line of circumvallation.—Workmen were speedily hired, and above an hundred each day came out to labour, under the direction of the Burgesses. When this step was taken they again assembled, and determined to establish a bye law; such (says the poet,) as was never heard of in England or France; which was publicly proclaimed the next day to the people, and received with applause; this law was as follows: "That on the ensuing Monday, the vintners, the mercers, the merchants, and the drapers should go and work at the fosse, from the hour of prime till noon." This was readily complied with, and above one thousand men," (writes the poet,) "went out to work every Monday with brave banners, and great pomp, attended by flutes and tabors. So soon as the hour of noon had sounded, these fine fellows returned home, with their banners borne before them, and the young men singing loudly and caroling through the town. The priests, also, who accompanied, fell to work at the fosse, and laboured right well, more so than the others, being young and skilful, of tall stature, strong, and well housed. The mariners, likewise, proceeded in good array

to the fosse, to the number of six hundred, with a banner preceding them, on which was depicted a vessel; and if all the people in the ships and barges had been hired, they would have amounted to eleven hundred men," a convincing proof of the importance of the town, at that time, as a mercantile port. On the Tuesday this party was succeeded by another, consisting of the tailors and cloth workers, the tentmakers, fullers, and celers,\* who went out in a similar manner as the former, but were not so numerous, amounting only to four hundred men. On the Wednesday, a different set was employed, viz., the cordwainers, tanners, and butchers, many brave bachelors were among them, and their banners were painted as appertains to their craft. In number, I believe, they were about three hundred taken together, little and great; and they went forth, caroling loudly as the others did. On the Thursday came the fishermen and hucksters. Their standards were of various sorts; but on one was painted a fish and a platter; these, five hundred in number, were associated with the wainrights, who were thirty-two in number. On Friday went out the ..... (illegible) in number three hundred and fifty, with their banners borne before them, unto the border of the fosse. On the Saturday succeeded the carpenters, blacksmiths, and masons—in number about three hundred and fifty. Lastly, on the Sunday, assembled in procession the ladies of the town! Know, verily, that they were excellent labourers, but their numbers I cannot certainly tell; but they all went forth to cast stones and carry them from the fosse. Whoever had been there to look at them, might have seen many a beautiful woman—many a mantle of scarlet, green, and russet—many a fair folded cloak, and many a gay coloured garment. In all the countries I ever visited never saw I so many fair ladies. He should have been born in a fortunate hour who might make his choice among them." The ladies also carried banners, in imitation of the other parties; and when they were tired of the duty assigned to them, they walked round the fosse, singing sweetly, to encourage the workmen. On their return to the town, the richer sort held a convivial meeting, "and," as we are told, "made sport, drank whiskey,

\* "Celers," mean saddlers, from the French word "selliers."

and sang," encouraging each other, and resolving to make a gate, which should be called the Ladies' Gate, and there would fix a prison. According to the poet, "the fosse was made twenty feet in depth, and its length extended above a league. When it shall be completed," adds the writer, "they may sleep securely, and will not require a guard; for if forty thousand men were to attack the town they would never be able to enter it, for they have sufficient means of defence; many a white hauberk and haubergeon—many a doublet and coat of mail, and a savage Garcon—many a good cross-bow-man have they, and many good archers. Never, in any town, beheld I so many good glaives, nor so many good cross bows hanging on the wall, nor so many quarrels to shoot withal, and every house full of maces, good shields, and talevases. They are well provided, I warrant you, to defend themselves from their enemies; for the cross-bow-men, in reality, amount to three hundred and sixty-three in number, as counted at their muster, and enrolled in the muster-roll. And of other archers have they one thousand two hundred brave fellows, be assured; and besides these there are three thousand men, armed with lances or axes, in the town; and knights on horseback one hundred and four, well armed for the combat."

The poet then assures us that the object of the inhabitants was by no means to court an assault; but simply for their own protection; "for which," says he, "no one ought to blame them;" they appear, however, to have amply provided for their safety; for the writer continues, "when the wall shall be completely carried round and fortified, no one in Ireland will be so hardy as to attack them; for by the time they have twice sounded a horn, the people assemble and fly to arms, each anxious to be before his neighbour, so courageous and valiant are they to revenge themselves on an enemy. God grant they may obtain revenge, and preserve the town with honour! And let all say amen, for charity! for it is the most hospitable town that exists in any nation; and every stranger is welcomed with joy, and may buy and sell at his will without any thing being demanded of him. I commend the town and all who inhabit it to God, amen." This was done in the year of the incarnation of our Lord, 1265.



CASTLE TOWNSEND.

Cork, August 21, 1834.

SIR—It has often astonished me, that while places far inferior to Castle Townsend are the resort of persons de-

siring sea-bathing, a spot so well calculated as this has been so long passed by. However, it is now, as it deserves, rising every day in importance, having been for